

'Twas on a Monday morning

I sometimes wonder about my husband. Do all men have peculiar fantasies or is it just mine?

It started when we went to a fancy-dress ball. I was planning to go as an Indian princess because my neighbour offered to lend me her sari, but my husband vetoed this. He wanted us to go as a thirteenth century couple like Robin Hood and Maid Marian. I gave in, rented costumes, and had a really good evening.

However, the next morning he put his costume on again and said he wanted me to step back in time with him. This was to include doing the housework in 13th century fashion. He got a mandolin, sat down in the kitchen, and started singing:

*'Twas on a Monday morning that I beheld my darling,
She looked so sweet and charming in every high degree.
She looked so neat and nimble-o, MENDING of her linen-o.
Dashing away with the smoothing iron,
dashing away with the smoothing iron,
She stole my heart away.*

Now, the only time I sew a button on is when its absence would create indecent exposure. And I do NOT darn socks. Luckily, this time everything was hanging together pretty well.

Next day he sang the same song, but this time about my task for Tuesday... Washing of my linen-o. For goodness sake, why couldn't I use the washing machine? I didn't mind heating the water on the fire, that's one thing, and soap made of something unmentionable is another thing. But bare-foot treading the sheets is right out of order. And my cashmere cardigan will never be the same again after pounding it with a stone.

Next day, Wednesday, I was to starch my linen-o. STARCH? I only vaguely remember what it was, and I certainly hadn't go any. I asked my Mum. She just said "Don't-encourage him - I told you he was weird but you would marry him" So I went round to my Granny's house, and she found a little box, brown with age at the back of the pantry shelf. It had a faded picture of a robin on it, and she swore it was starch, so I took it home. The instructions had disappeared, so I put the lot into the washing and swished it about.

"She looked so neat and nimble-o, adrying of her linen-o....." Well, big items I hung on a rope slung between the apple tree and our next-door neighbours' front door knocker. Everything else I spread over the privet hedges around the neighbourhood. It made Justin Park look like Kew Gardens, and next-door isn't speaking to me.

I was cheering myself up by the thought that Friday was getting towards the end of the week, when hubby came out with "ironing of her linen-o." No, I was not allowed my steam iron, so I borrowed a flat iron which was being used as a doorstop. It had to be heated and then spat upon to test its readiness. Spitting had my approval by now, so I smoothing-ironed away, ignoring the odd smell and the burn marks on everything.

In order to comply with the "airing-o" it was back to the apple-tree, the rope, and the privet hedges, but I didn't care - I have also had a letter from Neighbourhood Watch.

"'Twas on a Sunday morning that I beheld my darling, She looked so sweet and charming in every high degree. She looked so neat and nimble-o, WEARING of her linen-o." Sunday morning, and the sight of my dear husband trying to sit down in a church pew, in his scorch-marked, stiff as a board green tights has made it all worthwhile.